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Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), by which the Council requested me to report every 30 days on the implementation of paragraph 5 of the resolution, which sets the following benchmarks for the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID):

(a) No later than October 2007, UNAMID shall establish an initial operating capability for its headquarters and establish financial arrangements to cover troop costs for all personnel deployed to the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS);

(b) As at October 2007, UNAMID shall have completed preparations to assume operational command authority over the light support package, personnel currently deployed to AMIS and heavy support package and hybrid personnel by the date of transfer of authority;

(c) No later than 31 December 2007, UNAMID shall assume authority from AMIS.

The report covers steps taken towards those goals during August 2007.

II. Headquarters operating capability

2. The Joint Special Representative, Rodolphe Adada, his Deputy, Henry Anyidoho and the Force Commander of UNAMID, Major General Martin Luther Agwai, have already deployed to the Sudan. Priority recruitments have been identified and shortlists have been generated for other critical senior personnel of UNAMID, such as the Chief of Staff and crucial support personnel. Construction work is ongoing in El Fasher for office and living accommodations for the Joint Special Representative, including required voice and data communications equipment.

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III. African Union Mission in the Sudan and United Nations support

3. Donor-funded construction work has commenced on the expansion of the seven AMIS camps required for the deployment of two additional AMIS battalions. The first troops of the two battalions, from Nigeria and Rwanda, are expected to deploy during the AMIS rotation of troops in October.

4. The deployment by the United Nations of the light support package for AMIS to the Sudan is nearing completion. Light support package staff officers are providing support in setting up key functions, such as the Joint Operations Centre, the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and the Joint Logistics Centre, as well as relieving AMIS military observers from staff functions at headquarters. Light support package civilian staff are supporting AMIS in various areas, such as public information, legal affairs, humanitarian affairs, civil affairs, logistics and administration. All logistical support, with the exception of 36 armoured personnel carriers, has arrived in the mission area. The remaining armoured personnel carriers are expected to arrive together with elements of the two additional AMIS battalions in October.

5. The implementation of the heavy support package for AMIS is ongoing, together with efforts to establish a temporary (transitional) force headquarters and to restructure AMIS from its current eight sectors to three. As at the time of writing, 35 per cent of heavy support package civilian personnel had been deployed and three formed police units and 250 of the 301 individual police officers in the heavy support package had been selected. Most reconnaissance visits for the military units and formed police units of the heavy support package had also been completed.

IV. Preparations for transfer of authority

6. As part of the preparations for the transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID, the United Nations and the African Union have established a multidisciplinary UNAMID transition team in El Fasher, which is headed by the Deputy Joint Special Representative. The transition team is implementing deployment plans on the ground.

7. It is essential that sufficient military, police and logistical capabilities are able to operate effectively on the day of the transfer of authority in order to create an early and visible improvement in the security situation in Darfur, to establish the credibility of UNAMID, and to enhance public confidence in the new mission from the outset. To this end, during a joint planning session held in Addis Ababa from 30 July to 2 August, the United Nations and the African Union agreed to deploy to Darfur an early-effect capability before the transfer of authority. The police component of the early-effect capability will include one formed police unit and 40 individual police officers, while its military component will consist of one infantry battalion, four reserve companies, up to 60 liaison officers and military aviation capability. The United Nations and the African Union expect that this capability, together with the initial headquarters structures and the United Nations support packages for AMIS, will enable UNAMID to assume a credible posture when authority is transferred to it.

V. Force and personnel generation

8. The second meeting of countries contributing troops and police for UNAMID was held in New York on 3 August. The African Union also held a meeting of potential African troop contributors in Addis Ababa on 2 August. Two African Union military officers and one police officer arrived in New York on 25 August in order to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to finalize an agreement on troop generation and the configuration of the UNAMID military and police components.

9. Five troop-contributing countries have been identified for the early-effect deployment. For the broader UNAMID force structure, troop offers exceed the capabilities that the United Nations and the African Union requested in a number of areas, such as infantry battalions and companies. However, a number of potential troop contributors that have pledged these battalions and companies have indicated that they lacked the equipment necessary to implement their required tasks. Offers are still lacking for some critical military capabilities, including aviation units (utility helicopters) and transport and multi-role logistical units. Consequently, the force-generation process will have to continue, as a matter of the highest priority, past the timeline set in resolution 1769 (2007). The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the African Union team are contacting troop-contributing countries in the United Nations standby arrangements system to appeal for pledges for those outstanding requirements.

10. With respect to police contributions, all 19 required formed police units and 2,400 police officers have been formally pledged. However, those figures reflect large commitments from a small number of countries. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in consultation with the African Union, is seeking additional commitments in order to establish a diverse police component and finalize the selection process.

VI. Logistical arrangements

11. The process of pre-positioning strategic deployment stocks earmarked for UNAMID has commenced, and strategic deployment stocks worth $19 million are currently in El Obeid. The delays that were initially encountered in the clearance of United Nations equipment and goods at Port Sudan were resolved during the month of August.

12. A sole-source contract for camp support for the initial four UNAMID camps in Nyala, El Fasher, Geneina and Zalingei is expected to be awarded by 1 September 2007. The United Nations is working with the Government of the Sudan to facilitate the speedy conclusion of land-lease arrangements for all UNAMID locations throughout the three states of Darfur. In order to expedite the construction of camps and accommodation that meet United Nations safety standards, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan has deployed a dedicated procurement team to El Fasher to assist with the acquisition of the required materials. Meanwhile, the United Nations is working with AMIS partners to address other critical mission-support coordination issues, such as the transfer of equipment and assets donated to AMIS.

VII. Administrative and legal arrangements

13. A number of critical strategic and legal documents, such as the rules of engagement for the heavy support package and the concept of operations for UNAMID, were finalized and signed by the African Union and the United Nations during the joint planning session mentioned in paragraph 7. Directives to the Joint Special Representative, the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner are being finalized by the two organizations. In addition, given the joint nature of UNAMID, the United Nations and the African Union will define more broadly, in an exchange of letters, the legal terms of their partnership in Darfur in order to ensure the application of United Nations rules, regulations and procedures.

14. The United Nations has also initiated the drafting of a Status of Forces Agreement between UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan. The agreement will be finalized in consultation with the African Union before being shared with the Government of the Sudan. In keeping with resolution 1769 (2007), the model Status of Forces Agreement will apply pending the finalization of the agreement for UNAMID.

15. Meanwhile, the United Nations is working with the Government of the Sudan to facilitate the administrative procedures related to the deployment of UNAMID assets and personnel to the Sudan, including the process of obtaining visas for reconnaissance visits by UNAMID troop and police contributors. The United Nations is also working with the Government to lift the current limit on the number of flights and the number of aircraft allowed to land on airstrips in Darfur in order to facilitate the timely deployment of UNAMID, as well as the forthcoming rotation of AMIS troops, which is planned to take place from September to December.

VIII. Financial arrangements

16. On 31 July 2007, in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Controller requested commitment authority in the amount of $50 million for the steps required to establish an initial capacity for the mission's headquarters, to deploy two additional battalions and to reimburse AMIS contributing countries for troop costs, in keeping with paragraph 5 (b) of resolution 1769 (2007). The Advisory Committee responded positively on 8 August, providing the commitment authority for $50 million to meet the most immediate and essential needs of UNAMID. The complete budget for UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 is being prepared and will be submitted to the General Assembly by 1 October 2007.

IX. Observations

17. The establishment of UNAMID is making steady progress. However, the ability to meet the deployment benchmarks set out in resolution 1769 (2007) will be determined by a number of critical factors, such as the process of force generation and progress in the construction of safe accommodation and office facilities that meet United Nations safety standards. The necessary predeployment preparations involve enormously complex logistical operations in an area that is vast, remote and lacking in infrastructure. The unequivocal cooperation of all stakeholders is required

in order for the United Nations to successfully overcome those challenges. As the Organization continues to work with the utmost urgency to deploy this unprecedented operation, I call upon Member States to urgently provide the outstanding military contributions that are critical for UNAMID to fulfil its challenging mandate. I also count on the Government of the Sudan to facilitate expeditious land acquisition for the construction of UNAMID accommodation facilities, asset clearance at ports of entry and visa arrangements for reconnaissance visits by delegations from UNAMID troop and police contributors. At the same time, the United Nations will try to expedite the deployment of the heavy support package for AMIS, which, together with the now-operational light support package, constitutes the backbone of UNAMID.

18. Alongside preparations for the deployment of UNAMID, the United Nations and the African Union are committed to facilitating a comprehensive political solution to the conflict in Darfur. To that end, at the invitation of Special Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Salim, leaders of the Darfur movements, and representatives of Chad, Egypt, Eritrea and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya held consultations in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 3 to 6 August 2007. At the meeting, the non-signatory leaders welcomed the adoption of resolution 1769 (2007), expressed their readiness to participate in political negotiations under African Union and United Nations facilitation and articulated a common platform for the final negotiations. Since the consultations in Arusha, the Special Envoys have been consulting with the Government of the Sudan and the movements to narrow the gaps between the parties and agree on a suitable venue and timing for the talks. I look forward to their recommendations on whether the time has come to issue invitations for final negotiations.

19. Meanwhile, I am deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Darfur in recent weeks. Clashes between the Terjem and Rezeigat tribes in South Darfur resulted in the killing of 100 civilians in the first week of August, while a major attack by non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement on local police in Adilla (South Darfur) on 1 August caused the death of 20 policemen. Later that week and then again on 25 August, Government forces launched aerial bombardments of Adilla and other villages in Southern Darfur and attacked the village of Kilkil Abu Salam in Northern Darfur on 18 August. This violence caused the new displacement of 25,000 persons in the first 21 days of August alone. I am also deeply concerned by the reports of police action taken in Kalma camp on 21 August, during which AMIS and the United Nations were prevented from accessing the camp. It is unacceptable for any group to compromise the civilian and humanitarian nature of Kalma or any other camp for internally displaced persons because it puts internally displaced persons and humanitarian workers at serious risk.

20. In the meantime, I strongly condemn all attacks by all sides, and I appeal to the Government of the Sudan and to all parties to refrain from military action and to work towards creating a climate conducive to the negotiations envisaged. At the same time, I am concerned about reports of continuing arms flows into Darfur and call upon all parties concerned to strictly implement all Security Council decisions regarding the arms embargo in Darfur.

21. I intend to travel to the Sudan in September in order to, among other things, witness first-hand the challenges in setting up UNAMID and consult with the Government and other relevant actors on ways to expeditiously move the parties towards political negotiations. Upon my return, in my next report, I will share with the Security Council my impressions and further recommendations.